

Bellevue Today – What Makes This A Special Place

A “City in a Park”

When viewed from the air, Bellevue clearly fulfills its image as a “City in a Park.” Lying between Lakes Washington and Sammamish, interlaced with miles of urban forests, open streams, wetlands, freshwater lakes, and foothills rising to almost 1,400 feet, Bellevue is blessed with a rich natural environment.



A City in a Park

The city treasures and protects these natural places, maintaining more than 2,432 acres – nearly 10 percent of its land area – in city-owned open space, including natural areas and developed parks, greenbelts, and wetlands. Even in the heart of the downtown business district, Bellevue’s Downtown Park provides a green respite, an informal gathering place and a popular location for special events and celebrations. Abundant vegetation softens the impacts of commercial areas and blends them into the natural environment.

Great Neighborhoods

Bellevue is a great place to live, and in 2004, more than 116,000 people make their home in the city. Residents choose from a variety of housing types and living environments, ranging from the quiet, older neighborhoods of east Bellevue, to the new apartment and condominium neighborhoods in the



Bellevue neighborhoods offer attractive living environments.

Downtown, to the Cougar Mountain view lots near Bellevue’s southern edge. Convenient and family-friendly neighborhoods offer excellent schools and neighborhood amenities. The community also provides options in senior and assisted housing for residents who would like to stay in Bellevue as their housing needs change.

A Strong Economy

Once a bedroom community, Bellevue is now the major employment center of the Eastside, with a local workforce of more than 130,000 people. The city's regional shopping centers and large commercial areas – including Downtown, Eastgate, Overlake, and the SR 520/Bel-Red Corridor – provide jobs for workers from throughout the region. Large community retail and mixed use centers at Crossroads and Factoria serve the shopping needs of the entire city while smaller centers provide goods and services to homes in their immediate area. The vibrant economy not only bolsters employment, but also helps keep city tax rates low.

A Vibrant Downtown



Downtown Bellevue is the Eastside's major urban center.

Bellevue's Downtown is among the Northwest's most distinctive business districts, featuring a successful mix of office towers, stores, theatres, restaurants and hotels, along with such institutional uses as museums, the regional library, and Meydenbauer Convention Center. An increasing number of people live in Downtown, where new apartment and condominium complexes are coalescing into true urban neighborhoods.

Well Maintained, Safe, and Clean

Visitors to Bellevue often remark that the city feels "safe and clean." Residents and businesses value well-maintained homes and properties. The city places a high priority on maintaining public infrastructure, opting to ensure that existing facilities are in good shape before building new ones. Bellevue is also a safe place, with relatively low crime rates for a community of its size.

A Regional Role – Anchor of the Eastside

Strategically located at the intersection of Interstate 90, State Route 520, and Interstate 405, Bellevue is both the geographic center and the economic anchor of the Eastside. The Countywide Planning Policies reinforce Bellevue's decisions to concentrate growth in the Downtown, preserve neighborhoods, emphasize mobility, protect critical areas, and provide affordable housing.

Today's regional problems, such as traffic congestion and urban sprawl, demand solutions on a regional scale. Bellevue works as a leader in the region to find those solutions, and to formulate and carry out growth management policies that work for the entire region.

Educated and Involved People

Bellevue is one of the most highly educated communities in the nation, with 54 percent of adult residents having achieved a Bachelor's Degree or higher. The city is also increasingly diverse, with almost one in four Bellevue residents born outside the United States, according to the 2000 federal Census. Residents have a strong sense of community and a high percentage are active in volunteer activities, community associations, and projects that help shape the city.

A Dynamic and Maturing Community

In 2003, Bellevue celebrated its fiftieth birthday with a year-long series of community events. The city has come a long way since the early days of coal mines, logging, and strawberry farms. For most of its history, the city has been annexing new territory, developing vacant land, and building new roads, parks,



The Farmers' Market supports local farmers.

and utility systems. Today, Bellevue has come of age. Annexations in the next few years will be the city's last. Basic transportation systems, utility infrastructure, and parks are in place. As the economic and cultural hub of the Eastside, Bellevue faces a different set of issues, opportunities and challenges than those confronting the city in earlier decades.

Challenges for Tomorrow

Following are some of the critical community challenges which this Comprehensive Plan should address as Bellevue continues to evolve over the next twenty years.